

the tribes. A few people in one district were entirely cut off from their neighbors in other districts by the barrier of language. Traders who went from tribe to tribe, or from confederacy to confederacy, found that the few words of trade language which they had mastered in one region would not serve in another. Missionaries, who sought to spread the Christian religion, found it a hopeless task to promulgate their doctrines as itinerant evangelists, and were forced to establish themselves in districts by tribes, devoting themselves to a study of the languages individually. Every language seemed to have difficult vocables, with unpronounceable elements, and a grammatical structure that revelled in distinctions to which civilized men were unaccustomed in ordinary European speech. Some of the latter, however, occur in the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Latin. Thus, they found the declensions and conjugations of the three languages of historical learning pretty well developed, though variously modified; but, in addition, they discovered a set of grammatical distinctions which made those languages difficult of acquirement to them, though simple to those brought up in the use of such grammatical forms. Thus, distinctions were made between elder and younger brothers, elder and younger sisters, between uncles and aunts in the female and those in the male line, between cousins in the male line and cousins in the female line; and these were again distinguished as elder and younger. When things were to be counted, they had to learn a different set of numerals for different classes of things. Long objects were counted with one set of numerals, short objects with another, standing objects with a third, and recumbent objects with a fourth. Many such distinctions were observed, in addition to those of gender, number, case, tense, mood, and voice, with which, as scholars, they were familiar. *Chin*

Among a people not exceeding in number those of a small European nation, but widely scattered throughout North and South America, and regimented in bodies of kindred, a vast system of distinct languages was found, usually so unlike each other that they did not furnish a method of intercommunication between different peoples. Of such languages some hundreds are well known: perhaps there were thousands. Every year's investigation multiplies the number; and any one such language, when carefully studied, is found to be composed of a number of languages,—sometimes of those known elsewhere, often of languages otherwise unknown.

The multitude of tongues thus found is thrown into groups; each group representing a number of languages having common elements in